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621 594 The married man acts as the head of his household and answers for his wife, his daughters, and his unmarried sons. When he reaches middle life, after his daughters 621 596 have married and he has sons-in-law to heed his wishes, he is the head of an extended family and gains in prestige. If anything very serious, such as a witchcraft trial, brings the members of a local group together, though all adults are present, it is these heads of extended families who monopolize the discussion and [554] carry the decision. However, these representatives of extended families do not all stand on a par. They, and the families for whom they appear, vary in status and affluence. Of these elders, [622] one is the recognized leader and a person who is expected to voice his views in detail and with conviction. It is loyalty to this local group leader and trust in his wisdom which holds the particular nucleus of families together.

554 596 622 623 There may be others present, men distinguished for wealth, bravery, or exceptional ceremonial knowledge, who are little less important in status than the leader. The leader needs their good will and support and seldom ignores their advice when their desires are obvious. These men may be considered the inner circle of the council, the advisers upon whom the leader leans heavily. "The heads of extended families are not necessarily leaders. They are often men of some influence though. C. was the leader of his little bunch, yet he was not recognized as a great leader. N. was both. The leader, however, is sure to be also the head of an extended family." Most of the others, because they are younger or more retiring, or because they represent families that are small, poor, or low in social position, add little besides their presence and their assent to what is decided.

619 621 622 554 To complete the picture, it is necessary to add that it is the most dominating of the local group leaders who heads the band. This distinction is not always clear cut. Sometimes the membership of two different local groups of a band each considers its leader superior. Then, when these two local groups join forces, authority is fairly evenly divided. Thus, while the Central Chiricahua of all local groups acknowledged Cochise as their leader, among the Eastern Chiricahua some preferred the direction of Victorio, others had more confidence in Nana.

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683 When the anger of the relatives is not immediately spent, or
623 when the case involves many victims, a different course of ac-
69 tion may be adopted:

In olden times when suspected persons came before the council because they were acting peculiarly, and extreme measures were taken, like hanging them up by the wrists and putting wood under as though to light it, they would sometimes admit that they were witches. This was often done. I have seen it. If a person confessed, they burned him alive. The witch has to own up and name the ones that he harmed. Even if he promises to remove the evil influence, he is burned. When they are burned they have no more evil influence. Sometimes they were shot though—any way to get rid of them.

As this indicates, the examination and punishment of the witch are frequently matters of public interest:

When something wrong which affects the whole group occurs, the leader calls in the people involved, or the important men, or even all the people. For witchcraft, a council of this sort would be held. The case would be presented, and the influential men would decide on the punishment. A man can't accuse another of witchcraft before the council unless he is absolutely sure of it.

Execution by fire is the accepted way to annihilate the sorcerer:

They find out from the shaman if a person is a witch. Then they force him to tell if he did it. His relatives have no comeback. They string the witch up by the wrists so his feet are off the ground. The witch has to tell whom he witched. The confession is good evidence. Sometimes he has to tell what he used in his witch ceremony, and it is taken away. I have heard people, when strung up to a tree by their hands, admit that they were witches. They never let them go if they prove it on them. Then a fire is built under the witch, and he is burned. Burning destroys a witch's power for future harm, but what he has already accomplished is not undone. Witches do not burn up quickly; they keep on living a long time.

683 Relatives are not likely to stand solidly with their kinsman
602 when he faces a charge of sorcery. At other times a family can defend one of its members, for it will be pitted only against some other family group of comparable size. But since sorcery, unlike murder or theft, is a public offense, the witch's kin face an aroused neighborhood, and the odds are hopeless:

. . . . Even your own son will be punished the same way. The witch will insist on his side of the argument; his opponent may die within a short time. If